



WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Division of Economic Support

Bureau of Welfare Initiatives

**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
FSET Administrative and Provider Agencies
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies**

BWI OPERATIONS MEMO

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PRIORITY: High

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**SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM VOLUNTARY QUIT (VQT) FUNCTIONALITY IN
CARES**

CROSS REFERENCE: Food Stamp Handbook, Appendix 1.9.0, 1.9.1 and 8.0.0

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE

The Food Stamp (FS) program requires an individual be sanctioned from FS when they voluntarily quit a job without good cause (VQT). CARES (until now) was not able to accommodate sanctioning an individual for VQT. Economic support workers have been manually overriding an individual's eligibility to remove them from the FS assistance group (AG). We now have the functionality in CARES to sanction these individuals automatically. The first part of this operations memo reviews the FS VQT policy, the second part reviews how to enter voluntary quit sanctions in CARES.

CURRENT POLICY

An FS applicant/recipient who is required to register for the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program is not eligible for FS when they voluntarily quit a job without good cause. The VQT sanction can only be applied if, in the last week of employment, the quit job provided at least 20 hours of work per week OR the wages were at least \$103 per week. The individual is sanctioned for different time periods based on whether they are an applicant or a recipient.

Applicant

If the date of lost employment is within 60 days of the filing date, the person who VQT'd is ineligible for 90 days from the "lost employment" date. They are treated as a gross deemer in the household, meaning all of their income and assets are counted in the FS group's eligibility. The person is ineligible to be included in the FS AG until the sanction period is over **or** they meet the "ending sanction" criteria (listed below) **and** they are re-requesting FS.

Example: Ann and her husband Dave apply for FS on February 10th. In the intake interview, the worker finds out that Ann voluntarily quit a job without good cause on January 15th. Ann is FSET mandatory and the date she quit is within 60 days of the application. This means she will be ineligible for 90 days from the date of lost employment. In this example, she's ineligible to be included (i.e., sanctioned) from the FS AG until April 16th **or** until she re-requests FS, whichever is **later**. All of her current income and assets will be counted when determining Dave's FS allotment.

Recipient

A recipient in an ongoing case is ineligible to be included in the FS AG for 3 months beginning with the first possible payment month after the quit is discovered. If the FS participant was exempt from FSET solely because of the quit job, the quit makes them immediately FSET mandatory and therefore subject to the VQT policy. They are ineligible as a gross deemer in the FS AG until the sanction period is over **or** they meet the "ending sanction" criteria (listed below). In either instance, they must re-request FS to be reinstated.

Example: Ann and Dave have been on FS for 5 months. Dave got a full time on January 26th. They came in for an eligibility review on February 27th and the worker found out Dave quit his full time job without good cause yesterday. The job had provided more than 20 hours per week of work and paid more than \$103 per week. He became FSET mandatory immediately upon quitting the job and must now receive a 3-month VQT sanction. The sanction will be entered to CARES to affect the next possible payment month, which is April 1st. Dave will be ineligible for FS for April, May and June as a gross deemer. He will be eligible for FS beginning July 1st or back to the first of the month in which he re-requests FS, whichever is **later**.

Ending Sanctions

An individual may regain FS eligibility prior to the sanction end-date under certain situations. If good cause was found for quitting employment, the sanctioned person does not have to make a re-request to be added to the FS AG. It is very important to explore good cause criteria BEFORE entering a sanction to CARES.

For any other sanction ending reason, the individual must make a re-request prior to being added to the FS AG.

Here are the criteria for ending sanctions:

1. **Good Cause**
If a person is found to have a good reason for the VQT already entered in CARES, the sanction must be lifted back to the first of the month the good cause reason is reported for ongoing cases, or the filing date at application. No re-request of eligibility is required in this instance. FSET good cause reasons apply for ending VQT sanctions, though there are additional good cause reasons specific to VQT. The good cause reasons for FSET and VQT are listed in the FS Handbook, Appendix 8.0.0, and in CARES, they are found in reference table TEGC.
2. **Sanction Period Expires**
Once the VQT sanction period has expired, the individual will remain ineligible until they re-request inclusion in the FS group. For open FS AGs, the sanctioned person will remain ineligible until they specifically re-request FS. Once the person re-requests FS, they must be added in back to the first of the month of the re-request. A supplemental allotment for the person add must be manually calculated by the worker. CARES will add the person for the next possible payment month. If the FS case was denied or closed more than a calendar month, due to the fact the only person in the case was sanctioned, they must re-apply for FS. An application is considered a re-request for FS.

3. Comparable Employment

During the sanction period, the person may re-establish eligibility when s/he secures new employment which is comparable in salary or hours to the job which was quit. A re-request for FS is required prior to adding individuals meeting this sanction-ending criteria.

CARES**AFLE**

This screen is used to enter VQT sanctions. There are 3 ways to access this screen:

1. When entering an employment end date for a working individual on AFEI, hitting enter will take you right to AFLE.
2. On AFEQ, you can enter a "Y" in the second question listed on the screen and you will go to AFLE.
3. Tran directly to AFLE to enter information.

AFLE collects the shortlist number of the individual being sanctioned, the begin and end MMY of the sanction, the employer name, hours per week and wages per week of the quit job. AFLE is used to record good cause reasons for ending sanctions already imposed. It also records the re-request for FS and the re-request date. To accommodate the re-request policy, we have added two fields to this screen. A "Re-Request FS? (Y/N)" switch and a "Re-Request Date" field. These new fields are required for recording the re-request information when the sanction is ending or has expired and the person is re-requesting FS.

AFLE	LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT	05/18/99 11:28
CASE: 3700144032	WORKER: XCTE57	M WELCH
LAST UPDATED:	CASE STATUS: OPEN	CASE MODE: ONGOING
NUM: ____	NAME: _____	SSN: _____
DC: ____	BEGIN MMY: ____	END MMY: ____
SEQ NUM: EMPLOYER NAME: _____		
MAJOR WAGE EARNER ? (Y/N): N		
REFUSED EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING ? (Y/N): _		DATE REFUSED: _ _ _
LOST EMPLOYMENT ? (Y/N): _		DATE EMPLOYMENT LOST: _ _ _
HOURS WORKED PER WEEK: ____		WAGES EARNED PER WEEK: _____
GOOD CAUSE ? (Y/N): _ VR: ____		RE-REQUEST FS ? (Y/N): _
GOOD CAUSE REASON: ____		REQUEST DATE: _ _ _
-----INDIVIDUALS-----		
01 ALICI F (PP) 02 DENNI F (HUS) 03 JON H (NOT)		
NEXT TRAN: ____ PARMS: 3700144032_____		

Entering VQT Information in CARES

1. Enter the employment information on AFEI for the person who quit the job, being sure to include the employment end date and the date of last paycheck information. Once AFEI is completed and you hit enter, AFLE will come up. AFLE will carry over the short list number and name of the individual that quit the job, the employer name, and the date employment lost from AFEI.

2. If you tran directly to AFLE or access it by putting a "Y" on AFEQ, it will initially come up blank. No employment information will automatically appear using this procedure. All fields must be completed by the worker.
3. The "Major Wage Earner" field is no longer accessible.
4. You must record a "Y" or "N" in the "Refused employment or training?" field. If you put a "Y" in this field, you must enter a date. (NOTE: These fields are no longer used for eligibility purposes. They remain on this screen for historical purposes only.)
5. Enter a "Y" or "N" for "Lost Employment?". If you enter a "Y", you must enter the date employment was lost. If you enter an "N", you must still complete lost job information but you must be sure to enter a good cause reason for the lost employment so that a sanction is not applied.
6. Complete the "Date Employment Lost" field with the date the employment was quit. CARES uses this field to calculate the sanction period.
7. Enter the hours worked in the last week of the lost employment. If the hours worked in the last week are 20 or more, a VQT sanction will be imposed. If the hours are less than 20, a VQT sanction WILL NOT be applied. CARES uses this field to determine if a sanction must be applied.
8. Enter the wages earned in the last week of employment. If the wages earned in the last week of employment were \$103 or more, a sanction will be applied. If the wages earned in the last week are less than \$103, a VQT sanction WILL NOT be applied. CARES uses this field to determine if a sanction can be imposed.
9. Enter a "Y" or "N" in the "Good Cause" field. If the loss of employment meets one of the good cause criteria, enter a "Y". You must enter a verification code for the good cause as well as the reason for the good cause from Reference Table TEGC. CARES will not require the re-request information if good cause is entered. When good cause reasons are entered, the loss of employment information is recorded but no sanction will be applied or the existing sanction will be terminated. When a sanction is already in place and you enter a good cause reason, the next time you run SFED, the individual will be added to the FS for the next possible payment month. Depending on whether this is an application or an ongoing case, there may be a supplemental allotment due.
10. Enter a "Y" for re-request whenever the person re-requests inclusion in the FS group. When a "Y" is entered, the re-request date must also be entered. When SFED is run, CARES will determine if the person can be added by their re-request or not. If the person's sanction must still be in effect for the month you are running eligibility for, CARES will continue to exclude the individual.

Example: Barb and Jimmy applied for FS on February 12th. During the interview, it was discovered that Barb quit a full time job on January 31st. Since it hasn't been at least 60 days from the time she quit the job and applied for FS, she will be sanctioned from FS for 90 days from January 31st. (Barb's 90 day sanction ends on May 1st) On April 16th Barb and Jimmy come in for their 3 month FS review. At this time Barb is re-requesting FS and the ES worker enters a "Y" for re-requesting FS and enters April 16th as the re-request date on AFLE. Once she completes the review, SFED is run and Barb becomes eligible for May.

11. Run SFED and confirm benefits.

Example: Steve and Jennifer are on FS and their review is due 4-30-99. They come in to see their worker on 4-2-99 and during the interview, the worker finds out Steve quit a job without good cause on 3-1-99 and is just reporting it now. When AFEQ comes up in the review driver flow, the worker types a "Y" in the second question and when s/he hits enter, AFLE comes up. The screen is completed with the lost employment date of 3-1-99. [The following screens and text, to the heading "Individual Closure Reason Code 169", are part of this example.]

AFLE	LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT	04/04/99 13:06
CASE: 0700144307	WORKER: XCTE57	M WELCH
LAST UPDATED: 04 04 99	CASE STATUS: OPEN	CASE MODE: ONGOING
NUM: 01 NAME: STEVEN PLONSKY SSN: 306 77 8025		
DC: ____ BEGIN MMY: 0399 END MMY: ____		
SEQ NUM: 001 EMPLOYER NAME: HARDEE'S _____		
MAJOR WAGE EARNER ? (Y/N): N		
REFUSED EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING ? (Y/N): N DATE REFUSED: ____		
LOST EMPLOYMENT ? (Y/N): Y DATE EMPLOYMENT LOST: 03 01 99		
HOURS WORKED PER WEEK: 40 WAGES EARNED PER WEEK: 125.00		
GOOD CAUSE ? (Y/N): N VR: ____ RE-REQUEST FS ? (Y/N): n		
GOOD CAUSE REASON: ____ REQUEST DATE: ____		
-----INDIVIDUALS-----		
01 STEVE P (PP) 02 JENNI P (WIF)		
NEXT TRAN: ____ PARMS: 0700144307 _____		

The worker runs SFED and sees that Steve is removed from the FS effective 5-1-99. His participation status is GD.

SFCC	SFU COMPOSITION CHANGE	04/04/99 12:42
CASE: 0700144307	WORKER: XCTE57	M WELCH
PAYMENT BEGIN DATE: 05 01 99 PAYMENT END DATE: ____		
CAT: FS ____ SEQ: 01 ELIG STATUS: PASS REASONS:		
SFU PART COMP TRGT SFU PART COMP TRGT SFU PART COMP TRGT		
MBR STS CHG MBR STS CHG MBR STS CHG		
01 GD ____ Y 02 EA ____		
-----INDIVIDUALS-----		
01 STEVE P (PP) 02 JENNI P (WIF)		
NEXT TRAN: ____ PARMS: 0700144307 _____		

The non-financial on EEND eligibility shows Steve is ineligible because he quit a job with out showing good cause. The closure reason code is 169.

EEND	NON-FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION	04/04/99 12:28
CASE: 0700144307	CAT: FS SEQ: 01	WORKER: XCTE57 M WELCH
DETERMINATION DATE: 04 04 99	AG STATUS: OPEN	ELIGIBILITY STATUS: PA
PAYMENT BEGIN DATE: 05 01 99	PAYMENT END DATE:	
INDIVIDUAL RSLT NON-FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY FACTORS		
JENNI P 02 PASS		
STEVE P 01 FAIL 169 You have quit a job without showing good cause.		
----- INDIVIDUALS -----		
01 STEVE P (PP) 02 JENNI P (WIF)		
NEXT TRAN: _____ PARMS: 0700144307_____		

On April 15, Steve re-requests to be included in the FS AG, so the worker goes to AFLE and places a "Y" for the re-request and enters 04-15-99 as the re-request date. SFED is run and Steve remains ineligible for May FS because his sanction is still valid for May.

AFLE	LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT	04/15/99 13:15
CASE: 0700144307	WORKER: XCTE57 M WELCH	
LAST UPDATED: 04 04 99	CASE STATUS: OPEN	CASE MODE: ONGOING
NUM: 01 NAME: STEVEN	PLONSKY	SSN: 306 77 8025
DC: __ BEGIN MMY: 0399	END MMY: ____	
SEQ NUM: 001 EMPLOYER NAME: HARDEE'S_____		
MAJOR WAGE EARNER ? (Y/N): N		
REFUSED EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING ? (Y/N): N		DATE REFUSED: __ __ __
LOST EMPLOYMENT ? (Y/N): Y DATE EMPLOYMENT LOST: 03 01 99		
HOURS WORKED PER WEEK: 40 WAGES EARNED PER WEEK: 125.00		
GOOD CAUSE ? (Y/N): N VR: __		RE-REQUEST FS ? (Y/N): Y
GOOD CAUSE REASON: __		REQUEST DATE: 04 15 99
----- INDIVIDUALS -----		
01 STEVE P (PP) 02 JENNI P (WIF)		
NEXT TRAN: _____ PARMS: 0700144307_____		

INDIVIDUAL CLOSURE REASON CODE 169

This new closure reason code is used when a person is sanctioned from FS for VQT and becomes a gross deemer in the case. Closure reason code 169 will display on EEND for FS. The text says "You have quit a job without showing good cause". In a case with more than one individual, the sanctioned person will be treated as a gross deemer to the remaining eligible members. If all members of the FS group are ineligible, the AG will have a failure reason of 046.

CHANGING AIWP FSET STATUS FROM “EXEMPTION” TO “MANDATORY”

When you complete AFLE in order to impose a sanction and then run SFED, you may have to over-ride the FSET registration code on AIWP. This will be necessary when the last run of SFED showed the person was exempt from FSET. This will occur when there are hours or wages on AFEI that would normally result in an exemption from FSET. In this instance, you must confirm benefits when SFED is **first** run, change the FSET exemption code on AIWP to “M” (mandatory), and re-run SFED. The sanction will then be applied. (See FS Handbook, Appendix 8.4.1 regarding the “exempt” to “mandatory” status upon voluntarily quitting a job without good cause.)

RUNNING ELIGIBILITY (SFED) WITH PAST DATES

Some cases in CARES have old information on AFLE. The old VQT information will not affect current eligibility if the sanction period has expired. However, the re-request switch was defaulted to “N” when these fields were added to AFLE. When running with a past month where the individual was actually included in the FS group, you must follow these procedures:

1. Verify that the individual was eligible and included in the FS group for the month you are running eligibility.
2. Go to AFLE and put the re-request switch to “Y” and enter a re-request date that is prior to the month you are determining eligibility. By this, we mean a date that is after the end of the sanction period **and** the individual was included as an eligible FS group member for that month. You must be sure to enter a re-request date that is accurate.
3. Run SFED for the specified month and the individual’s participation status should show as EA (eligible adult).

PLEASE NOTE: If these procedures are not followed, a person that was actually eligible in a past month will have their participation status come up as GD when running SFED with past dates. This situation will occur until the re-request information is entered on AFLE.

CONTACTS

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